



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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YUMA MAN ARRESTED FOR BRIBING AN IRS OFFICIAL

TUCSON, ARIZONA -- The United States Attorney's Office for the District of Arizona announces that on Thursday, October 30, 2003 **STEPHEN J. (BUDDY) MERTEN**, DOB: 08-25-1943, of Yuma, Arizona was arrested without incident by federal agents of the Department of Treasury.

The criminal complaint charges **STEPHEN J. (BUDDY) MERTEN**, with violating Title 18, United States Code, Section 201(b)(1)(C), Bribery of a Public Official. A conviction for Bribery a Public Official carries a maximum penalty of 15 years, a \$250,000.00 fine or both.

The criminal complaint states that on or about November 18, 2002, at or near Tucson, Arizona, Mr. Merten offered \$20,000 to an Internal Revenue Service (IRS) employee to illegally eliminate approximately \$300,000 in delinquent payroll tax liabilities owed to the IRS by the defendant's business, B& B Amusements, Incorporated. On April 3, 2003, the defendant gave the IRS employee \$2,000 in cash as payment toward the promised \$20,000. On July 15, 2003, an employee of the defendant met with the IRS employee in Yuma, Arizona and the IRS employee received an envelope containing an additional \$2,000 in cash.

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A criminal complaint is simply the method by which a person is charged with criminal activity and raises no inference of guilt. An individual is presumed innocent until competent evidence is presented to a jury that establishes guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

The investigation preceding the indictment was conducted Special Agent Bruce A. Mason of the Department of Treasury, Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration.

The prosecution is being handled by Daniel J. Santander, Assistant United States Attorney, District of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona.

CASE NUMBER: 03-03820M
RELEASE NUMBER: 2003-189

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